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SKYBOY

A PLAY FOR LITTLE FOLKS

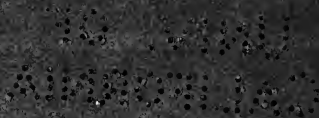
BY
GERTRUDE KNEVELS



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THE CAMP FIRE OUTFITTING CO.
17-19 WEST 17th STREET
NEW YORK

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SKYBOY

A PLAY FOR LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS WITH
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COSTUMES
AND DANCES

By GERTRUDE KNEVELS



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SKYBOY

Characters :

Mother Bluebird

Father Bluebird

Skyboy, their eldest son

Featherkin

Rufflekin

Pufflekin

Plumpy

} Very young Bluebirds :

Jack Sparrow

Gobbler

Guzzler

Snatcher

Squeak

} Four Naughty Sparrows :

Cock Robin

Jenny Wren

Judge Owl

If it is desired to provide parts for a larger number of players than is here indicated, other bluebirds or bird neighbors, may accompany Mother Bluebird on her second entrance, and join in dance at close of play.

COSTUMES FOR THE PLAY

Plan No. 1. If time and expense must be closely economized, let the children who take the parts of bluebirds wear the regular dress of the Bluebird organization. In this case the costumes of Cock Robin, Jenny Wren, Judge Owl, and the Sparrows should be made on the same general lines. For the coloring of these last consult the illustrations in any good bird book. (See Reed's Bird Guide, Part 2.)

Proportion, must, of course, be considered; that is the part of Judge Owl should be taken by the tallest of the children. He should have a curved beak and large round eyes made by pasting a circle of yellow paper on a circle of

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black. Eyes and beak can be attached to his helmet cap. The feathers on his grayish brown dress should be cut square or rounded, on the ends, not pointed. Robin Red-breast must be stuffed to look very fat, Jenny Wren should be small, slim, and dainty. The sparrows, Jack in particular, are bold, swaggering fellows, their feathers ruffled and untidy.

Plan No. 2. In case a closer illusion is desired, costumes on the lines of the cuts furnished can be made at small expense. The material may be cotton flannel or a like material and the suits made on the order of rompers reaching from neck to knee. If preferred, tunics can be worn over knickerbockers. In either case the suits should be of the bird's characteristic colors, the feathers sewed on as they are on the Bluebird dress. Helmet shaped hoods are worn. It is suggested that trousers may give a more bird-like effect than skirts, especially when a tail, carefully shaped and heavily wired, is attached to the waist at back. Stockings and slippers of same color as dress should be worn, the toes of slippers may be covered with cloth and wired out in sharp points.

HOPPING DANCE

Accompanying song, "Hippy, hoppy, hippy hop" Page 4.

In varying or elaborating this simple little dance to suit individual taste, it need only be remembered that real bluebirds hop on both feet like robins, and do not walk like starlings. If all the children who take part in the play will study the birds they are to impersonate before coming to rehearsal, their pleasure in the work and the educational benefit they derive from it will be greatly increased.

Directions for Dance and Song. Tune—"Yankee Doodle."

On rise of curtain, Featherkin, Rufflekin, Puffkin and Plumpy, the four little bluebirds, are seen standing side by side, facing the audience.

Verse 1—While singing first line, all hop forward on both feet, 4 hops. 2nd line sung standing still. 3rd line: Each

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bird hops round in place; 4 hops, facing audience on 4th count. 4th line sung standing still.

Verse 2—1st line sung standing still, all bow on last word. 2nd line: All raise and lower wings in "flying" motion, bending twice to right, twice to left. 3rd line sung standing still until word "hop" when all hop forward once. 4th line sung standing still.

Verse 3—1st line, hop backward on both feet 4 hops. Rest same as first verse except that all bow low on last word and hop once in place. While music continues, birds face left and follow leader round in circle 4 hops. Turn quickly, 4 hops to right. Face in. 4 hops in, 4 hops back. Each hops 4 times round in place. Face right. 4 hops etc. Repeat, if desired. Break circle and go to meet Mother Bluebird.

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TIME: Afternoon in Birdland.

SCENE: Any simple outdoor setting—a green lawn or bit of garden with hedge in background. Entrances between bushes at right and left. At rise of curtain, Featherkin, Rufflekin, Pufflekin and Plumpy, the four small Bluebirds, are seen side by side, facing audience. They hop forward as they sing. See description Hopping Dance. Music, "Yankee Doodle."

Young Birds sing:

Hippy, hoppy, hippy, hop!
Hopping is such fun-oh!
Hopping's very hard to stop
When once you have begun-oh!

Happy baby birds are we,
Some day we will fly-oh!
Now we'd rather hop, you see,
While our dear Mother's by-oh!

Hippy, hoppy, hippy, hop!
Hopping is such fun-oh!

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Hopping's very hard to stop
When once you have begun—oh!

(Enter Mother Bluebird. Small birds break circle and flutter toward her. She takes centre of stage.)

Young Birds: Oh Mother, Mother Bluebird!

Mother B. Children dear!—

I'm going now to hunt for food,
Stay here and promise to be good.

Featherkin: (coaxingly) Please take us with you,
Mother, please!

Mother B. No, you're too little, dears, don't tease.

Rufflekin: Oh Mother, Mother, don't say that—

Pufflekin: Such tales you've told of TOMMY-CAT—

Plumpy: And what if naughty birds annoy?

Who'll help us then?

Mother B. Skyboy! (she goes toward R. and calls)
Skyboy!

(Bluebird note is heard answering faintly in distance.)

Mother B. (proudly) He comes! Your brother's voice
I've heard,

No cruel cat or stranger bird

Will dare my little ones annoy

While he is near.

(Note repeated close by, clearly and loudly. The bluebird notes and other bird calls throughout play should be very carefully imitated by some person who understands them thoroughly.)

Young birds: Welcome, Skyboy!

(Skyboy "flies" in, fluttering and circling about stage once or twice, then pausing centre-front to speak. His wing movements illustrate speech, every motion being proud and joyous.)

Skyboy: Joy! Joy! Joy!

Well have you named me Skyboy.

High, high, high!

Up to the roof of the sky,

Up, up, on without rest,

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Then down, down to my nest—

Homeward I fly!

Mother B. Oh rash, so rash, dear foolish one,
My bold Skyboy, my fearless son!
Brave wings rise high, yet I confess
Such flights your mother's heart distress.
In my low nest you had your birth,
True happiness lies close to earth.
Now rest, and while I'm gone take care
Of these, my little ones. Beware
All dangers, Skyboy. *Do not stray!*
From naughty Sparrows keep away!
Watch close lest any harm come near—

Skyboy (impatiently)—Dear foolish Mother, have no
fear,

For surely you must understand,

No harm could come when *I'm* at hand!

Mother B. Then I'll be off—(hurries off R.) Goodby!—

Young Birds:—Goodby!

Skyboy (sulkily) Not meant for fledgling's nurse was I!

If in this stupid place I stay,

I'll call my friends to come and play.

Featherkin: (hopping to left and cocking head to listen)

Call Jenny Wren! On yonder bough

Her pretty song she's singing now!

(Loud joyous note of house-wren is heard outside, several
times repeated.)

Skyboy: I will not play with Jenny Wren,

She's stupid as a barnyard hen!

In box or blind she builds her nest,

Such homely ways I do detest.

Pufflekin: (hopping to right, and cocking head to listen)

Dear Robin Red-breast—hear his call!

The gayest, bravest bird of all.

(All listen. Cheery note of Robin is heard, several times
repeated.)

Skyboy: That greedy bird's too fat to play—

His weight he eats ten times a day!

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(Sparrow's loud cheeping heard outside.)

No, no—ah, swift as darting arrow—

Who comes this way? My chum—Jack Sparrow!

(Enter Jack Sparrow, swaggering and cheeping loudly.)

Rufflekin (reproachfully) But, Brother, what did Mother say?

Three Young Birds (solemnly)

"From naughty Sparrows keep away!"

Skyboy: But Jack's my friend! Ah Jack,—

Jack: (loudly)—Good day!

Skyboy (enviously) Dear me, what pleasant things we'd do,

If I were free to fly like you.

Jack: Not free to fly? What keeps you here?

Skyboy: I have to watch lest harm come near

These children. Mother said to stay

Till she returns at close of day.

Jack (strutting to and fro across stage and mocking Skyboy.)

"His Mother said"—upon my word—

Ha, ha! This good obedient bird,

Skyboy, stays home and minds his mother!

Plays nurse to sister and to brother,

While Jolly Jack can sport and play!

See, Stupid, see—I'll chase away

These gaping babies. Ha, what fun—

Too young to fly—too weak to run!

(He pecks savagely at young birds and chases them around stage. They hide behind Skyboy who spreads wings in front of them.)

Skyboy: Stop, stop, you shall not hurt them. No!

Go—or I'll call my Mother—Go!

Jack (mocking him) Yes, call your mother, Baby—do!

From miles away she'll answer you.

(Pecks at Skyboy.)

Skyboy (drooping wing) Oh, oh, I'm wounded!

Featherkin—

Run children, run—call Robin in.

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(Small birds go out.)

The wrens will help—Make haste—

Jack: —Ho, ho!

Yes, help is needed, babies, go!

(To Skyboy)

Both Wren and Robin overheard

Your rude remarks, you silly bird!

They will not come. Good friends have I—

Ho, Sparrows, brother-rascals, fly—

Ho, Gobbler, Guzzler, Snatcher, Squeak—

Come help me now with claws and beak,

We'll tear his heart out, you and I—

Skyboy must die—Skyboy must die!

(Loud noise of cheeping outside. Enter Gobbler, Guzzler, Snatcher and Squeak who fuss and flutter about Skyboy without daring to get within reach of his beak.)

Gobbler: What is it, Friend Jack? Ah—a Bluebird to kill!

Guzzler: Of fighting and mischief we'll all have our fill!

Jack (standing back) Quick, at him, Gobbler! Strike him, Squeak!

One blow will do from your sharp beak!

Squeak (turning on Jack) From mine, yes, mine—

That's very fine—

While you, Friend Jack,

Will turn your back!

Jack (to others) Who'll lead the way?

Snatch: Not I today!

Guzzler: What's that I hear?

Gobbler: His friends are near—

Squeak: Quick—let's away! (they hurry off L.)

Jack: Stay, cowards, stay!

(He tries to escape also but is held back by Skyboy. Bird notes heard close at hand from right. Enter hurriedly Mother Bluebird, Father B. the young birds, Jenny Wren, and Cock Robin. Jack Sparrow is caught and held between Father B. and Cock Robin.)

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Father B. To late, Jack Sparrow! (to Robin) Hold him fast!

Mother B. Skyboy, my son, you're safe at last!

Skyboy: (drooping head and looking much ashamed.)

Oh Mother, Father, neighbors kind,

This was my fault. I would not mind.

Your warnings wise I did not heed;

But I am punished—yes, indeed! (shows wing)

Robin: Cheer up! This wounded wing will mend

As quickly as your manners, Friend!

Wren: Don't scold, Cock Robin; pray, don't tease!

Now, neighbors, let's consider, please,

What shall be done with Jacky here?—

Father B. Judge Owl will try his case, don't fear!

The Birds: Judge Owl! Judge Owl! Judge Owl!

(The call is answered by solemn "Who? Who?" of Owl outside. Enter Judge Owl from right. He is very solemn and dignified. Birds bow low and allow him to pass to front.)

Judge Owl: Well, here am I this case to try,

Pray trot your Prisoner out, Sirs.

What has he done? Speak, one by one!

What's all this fuss about, Sirs?

Mother B: I'll be first witness, hear me speak—

My baby birds, my fledgings weak,

'Ere I had scarcely turned my back,

This rascal sparrow did attack!

Robin: Worse yet, the sparrow-folk increase

So fast we singers have no peace.

The food our kindly Brother Man

Spreads day by day for us we can

But rarely reach. These robbers come

And steal it all—yes, every crumb!

Jenny Wren: In towns Jack Sparrow used to dwell.

His ugly coat is suited well

To dust and dirt. Now with alarm

We see his folk crowd field and farm.

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With thieving, fighting, noise, and fuss
No joy in life they leave to us!

Judge Owl (very solemnly to Jack Sparrow)
From all I hear, I sadly fear
Your latest song is sung. Sir.

What friend will plead in your sad need?
No, Jack—you shall be hung, Sir!

Jack (appealing to birds) What? Robin Red-breast?
Jenny Wren?

Will no bird speak? Must I die, then?

Skyboy (coming forward)

I'll speak, I'll help, indeed I will!

Jack Sparrow did not mean to *kill*

His friend, Skyboy! Now, while I tell
Of things that long ago befell,

Have patience, friends and neighbors, do,

The story I'll relate to you,

Grandfather Eagle who's so old

To me has very often told.

In eighteen-fifty—long ago—

A pest of worms plagued Mankind so—

Worms swarmed each tree and ate each leaf,

The thing was almost past belief!

Man called the birds, but those who flew

To help were all—alas—too few;

And some rejoiced, and would not aid,

Thinking Man's crimes to birds repaid.

But Man is wise as well as strong,

That pest he did not suffer long.

From England, far across the sea,

He fetched a tiny bird to be

The death of wicked worms. Now guess—

That bird was named—

Birds in chorus:—Jack Sparrow!—

Skyboy: Yes!—

The Great-Grandfather of poor Jack

Whose crimes today we paint so black.

Though Man hates Jack, his debt forgot,

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Let birds be merciful, and not
Deprive him of his life—

Robin: What, what—

You'd let him go?

Jack (appealingly) Yes, yes!

Several birds:—Not so!—

Judge Owl (sternly) Silence, I say! Enough, today—

My sentence I will give now—

If far away, Jack, you will stay,

We'll kindly let you live now.

Remember, should the Sparrow brood

The Singing Birds annoy, Sir,

Friend Man and we their death will be—

Your life you owe Skyboy, Sir!

(Judge Owl bows to Skyboy.)

Jack (joyfully) I will be good, I'll go, I'll go,

Pray let me loose! I'm free—ho, ho!

(As they free him, he flutters off right, then stops and looks back at Skyboy.)

Jack: Farewell, Skyboy, no more you'll see

Your naughty friend on bush or tree.

Though far away Jack Sparrow stays,

He'll not forget you all his days!

Skyboy: Goodbye! I'll think of you—ah yes!

(Jack goes out.)

Father B: Come, Friends, we've had enough, I guess
Of care and sadness. Let's rejoice!

Robin: Yes, let us dance! All birds make choice
Of partners. Jenny, I'll choose you. (bows to Wren.)

Jenny Wren: (returning bow)

First, dears, a merry thing we'll do;

A circle we will form—just so (birds form circle.)

Now in the middle who shall go?

What bird's our pride? What bird's our joy?

Whom shall we choose?—

SKYBOY

Birds: Skyboy! Skyboy! (Skyboy enters circle. All birds bow low.)

Birds: Yes, now we'll dance, and sing our joy!

Skyboy's our King—Skyboy! Skyboy!

(All birds dance merrily round Skyboy. Music—"Yankee Doodle.")

CURTAIN.



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